

A SHORT 8826 47
METHOD

Propos'd to prevent the
Desertion of Soldiers

For the Future:
And to supply the **ARMY**

With a Large and Speedy

RECRUIT
Out of the great Numbers of Deserters
Now in *ENGLAND*.

Humbly inscrib'd to the
General Officers commanding the
Foot and Marines.

L O N D O N:

Printed for B. Barker, and C. King, at the *White-Hart*, and
Judges Head, both in *Westminster-Hall*, 1710.

SHORT

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Proposed to prevent the

Defection of Soldiers

For the Future:

And to supply the ARMY

With a Large and Speedy

RECRUIT

Out of the great Numbers of Soldiers



Humbly inscribed to the

General Officers commanding the
Foot and Cavalry.

LONDON:

Printed for R. Baskin, and C. King, at the White-Hall, and
George Mead, in the Strand, 1793.

THE PREFACE.

I Have often had it in my Thoughts, from what I observ'd while I was in the Army, that there might be some Method, to make the Desertion of Soldiers more difficult than it is at present in England; but the Hopes and Expectation of a Speedy Peace prevented me from Offering (in this manner) what I have great reason to believe may be of Use to prevent that most mischievous and scandalous Practice.

But since Her Majesty, by Her Royal Proclamation, has again commanded the Commissioners to use their utmost Diligence in putting the Act in Execution to Recruit the Army: I thought this a proper Time to offer the following Tract; in which I have endeavour'd to shew what are the chief Causes of Desertion, and what I believe may be useful in order to stop that pernicious Practice for the future; and, if duly put in Execution, I cannot see what should hinder it from bringing in a large and timely Recruit to the Army, out of the great Numbers of Deserters that now live secure in England. Which will of course save the Publick great Sums in Levy-Money, which of late has been a very Expensive Article to the Kingdom, and be an Ease to the Commissioners; for the fewer Soldiers Desert, or the more are taken of them, the less Occasion there will be for
their

The P R E F A C E.

their listing Men. And this is what Her Majesty did Graciously think fit to declare in Her Proclamation, as the Reason at that time to put a Stop to the Impressing any more Soldiers, or Marines, viz. For the saving further Charge to the Publick, and for the Ease of Her Loving Subjects.

And there is a greater Necessity to look after Deserters more strictly at this time than there has been since the War began; not only from the Reason of the vast Increase of their Numbers every Year, but for that 'tis evident, the large Levy-Money did not, nor can it be expected ever will, answer its Ends, in bringing in Voluntiers; and the Country is already so drain'd (whatever the Town may be) of those sort of Men that have no lawful Employment, or visible Means for their Maintenance, that I am afraid it will be very difficult, if possible, to Recruit the Army in the time requir'd, except the Commissioners and Officers can with more Ease detect those Sparks that have deserted from it, than the Laws, now in force for that Service, will give them Leave or Opportunity to do.

To be sold at the same Places.

A *N Essay on the most effectual Way to Recruit the Army, and render it more serviceable, by preventing Desertion: Humbly offer'd to the Consideration of the Parliament of Great-Britain.*

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A SHORT METHOD

Propos'd to Prevent the Desertion of Soldiers

For the Future :

And, To Supply the *ARMY* with a Large
and Timely *RECRUIT*, out of the great
Numbers of Deserters that are now in
England.

 F all the Difficulties we have been contending with
in the Prosecution of this just and necessary War,
I believe none have been greater, and attended
with worse Consequences, than our not being able
to keep up our Infantry of the Army compleat and serviceable ;
occasion'd only by the constant Desertion of the Soldiers, es-
pecially at home: For I am very well satisfied that there
has not been any new Levies made, or reduc'd Regiments rais'd
again, in *England*, since this War began, but the Officers have
compleatly fill'd their Companies with duly listed able-bodied
Men, in the Time allow'd them by the Government, could
they have kept them to their Duty afterwards.

And the Posture of the present War with *France* is such,
that tho' we have a Fleet that is the most considerable of any
Nation in the World, yet if they guard us at home, protect
our Merchants abroad, insult and stop the Enemies Com-
merce by Sea, and safely convoy the Soldiers where they can
be most serviceable, is all that is desired or expected from
them ;

them ; for *France* has her Coasts too well guarded both by Art and Nature, for our Fleets to make any great and successful Attempts upon their Country.

'Tis the Land-Army, therefore, that we must depend on to humble the Common-Enemy and Oppressor ; to reduce him to Reason and just Bounds. 'Tis on their Motions that all *Europe* have their Eyes fixt, and all their Hope depends, for the obtaining what we have been so long contending for, *viz.* the restoring the just Balance of Power in *Europe*, by a safe, lasting, and honourable Peace. And the many and glorious Proofs the Army have given of their Abilities, throughout the whole Course of this War, are such, as sufficiently shew them capable of Discharging the great Trust reposed in them ; provided the Foot are timely recruited, and the several Regiments kept up compleat and serviceable ; without which, 'tis unreasonable to expect them to discharge their Duty with the desired Success.

For in the Army, the Weight and Burden of the War depends on the Infantry : 'Tis they alone must reduce the strong Fortresses of *France* ; in the Performance of which, the Foot-Soldiers are often engaged in a subterraneous War, and meet Death in all its most horrid Forms, and dreadfulest Aspects. 'Tis the Foot-Soldier who must force the Enemies strong entrench'd Camps, (which Necessity, the Mother of Invention, has made the *French* such Artists at) : 'Tis they must open a Passage for the Cavalry, who are in a manner useless, till they can gallop to the Charge.

And I have all the reason in the World to believe that had it not been for the constant Disappointments occasion'd by Desertion, which has so often render'd the greatest part of our Infantry unserviceable, *France* had been obliged to have complied with our own Terms of Peace long since.

For no doubt on't, many a well-concerted Expedition has miscarried, or been laid by, for no other Reason but that the Soldiers that were to have the chief Share in the Action, could not be in any tolerable Condition for the Service, in the Time required ;

required; and this wholly occasion'd by the great Desertion of the Foot. For though the Regiments began their March compleat, or were so at least but a Day or two before they left their Quarters, yet before they could be embark'd, there are many Instances, and indeed seldom otherwise, that above a third part of the Men have run from their Colours, notwithstanding all the Care and Diligence of the Officers to the contrary, and before they could be compleated again by Draughts, &c. the Season has been too far advanced.

And this Computation is so far from being an aggravating Charge, that I believe very few Regiments have been rais'd and ship'd from *England*, for this five Years past, that the Pressing-Act has been in Force, that have lost so few of their strongest and able-bodied Men, as a third Part; for I can name several Regiments that have lost, by Desertion only, above 300 Men in *England*, in a Years time; but Mr. *Bridges* and Mr. *Hew's* Officers, that did pay the Levy-Mony for the Years 1707, and 1708. and by it can tell what Men were listed, and the Commissary of the Muster's Rolls compar'd, will make this Matter evident beyond Dispute, were there any Occasion to make a Computation of a Matter that every Officer in the Army, and every Office belonging to it so well know.

And further, At this time, a great many Officers who were recruiting in those Years, not only their Arrears are all subjected, but their Subsistence stopt to make good the Loss by the Desertion of Men, before they could be brought to the Regiment, or muster'd by a Commissary; for upon the Return of the Certificate of the Listing to the Office, the Levy-Mony was paid; and where the Soldier did not appear on the Muster-Roll afterwards, the Regiment was charg'd with the Mony, and the Regiment charg'd it on the unfortunate Officer, though it was evident he did all that was possible for him to keep his Men, and bring them to their Quarters: how it will be this last Year, where all the Levy-Mony was paid by the Land-Tax, is not known; the Accounts and Returns of the Collectors being not yet stated; but I am sure, many an honest Gentleman dreads the Charge of it more than any from the Enemy. And though her Majesty has 50 Regiments of Foot
and.

and Marines, of her Subjects of *Great-Britain*, (besides her Guards and those in *Flanders* and *North-Britain* :) And tho' the Officers have made use of all the Helps the late excellent *Recruit-Act* could give them, and us'd all the Diligence and Application that is requir'd from Gentlemen zealous for her Majesty's Service, to compleat their Companies, yet the private Men desert so fast, that before they can so much as teach them the Use of their Arms, so many have run from their Colours, that, I am afraid, out of the 50 Baralions not one of them is at present compleat, nor 20 of them to be found in any tolerable Condition for present Service.

And 'tis not a great Number of Regiments that will signify much against the Enemy, except the Officers can keep up their Companies with well-disciplin'd Soldiers; for though the continual New-listing and Desertion of Men may bring Money into the *Parish-Stocks*, yet it is the Ruin and Destruction of the Army; for Soldiers are of little Use, except the Officers have time to discipline and make 'em fit for Service.

Let any Man, therefore, that has any Regard for the Good and Happiness of his Country, but seriously consider our Circumstances, as to this Matter; let him but state the Case as in Truth and Reality it is; That we are engaged in an expensive War, on the Event of which depends all that is dear and valuable to us in this World; That our chief Dependancy, under God, for an honourable Peace, is on the Army; and That, in this Army, the Weight and Burden of the War lies on the Infantry; He will then be soon convinc'd how much it is the Interest of every one that loves his Country, or has any Regard to his own Property, to contribute all he can to keep up the Regiments of Foot serviceable, and to prevent, as much as in his Power, the notorious Desertion from it, that is so very destructive to the Army in particular, and to the Nation in general; by its Consequences, and if not timely prevented, must unavoidably carry the most fatal Evils along with it.

And yet as obvious as this is, to any one that will give himself the least Pains to enquire into the Truth of it, is it not matter of Surprize and Wonder that we should have above 20000
Men

Men that have Deserted this War, that live at home in *England*, secure and undisturb'd? and that I do not make the Computation too large, let the Majors and their Adjutants, but look over their Books of Desertion, which they do, or ought to, keep exact, and then let them shew One Regiment in Twenty, that has been of two Years standing, that have not lost more Men by Desertion, since their first raising, this War, than they have now private Men in their Regiments; and if so, my Account of their Numbers will not appear over-rated, and leave room for a large Allowance for those that are dead, or those that have been apprehended and made serve again.

And the chief if not only Cause of this Mischief, is owing to the almost constant Security and Protection, Deserters find at home; for 'tis observable that Desertion abroad is more or less, according to the Opportunities they have of getting to *England*, (that is the alluring Bait that induces Soldiers to quit their Duty) where they are sure to have all the Help and Assistance of the mean and ordinary People to conceal them, out of a mistaken Principle of Charity. The Farmer and Handicraft-Tradesman for Self-Interest and Gain, for that they can have their Labour the cheaper for the Circumstances the Deserter lies under: and the Gentlemen themselves, that should know better, and ought to give other Examples, seldom fail to make use of their Hands, when it is for their Conveniency; and, when they imploy him, where will be found the Constable that will disoblige the Justice, or Parish-Officer, the Lord of the Mannor, when the Matter is disputable whether the Man be a Deserter or not?

Nor is it prudent for any Officer of the Army to meddle with them, for he is almost sure to disoblige the Gentlemen that may be serviceable to him in recruiting, but uncertain to prove the Desertion 'till the Manner of convicting of 'em is made more easie and practicable.

And the Farmer and Tradesman, to secure those they imploy, hire them for small Wages, for Covenant-Servants, which puts it out of the Power of the Commissioners to send them again into the Army, except it can be prov'd they have deserted from it, which is prevented by producing a Discharge; which, tho'

made under a Hedge, yet as Discharges that are legal are now made, or at least were before the Power was lodg'd in the Field-Officer only, in which the Officer that sign'd it seldom mention'd what Commission he serv'd with, whether Colonel, Major, Captain, Lieutenant, or Ensign; so that except the very Officer that gave it, or is pretended to give it, be on the Spot, or one that perfectly knows his Hand, there is no discovering the Cheat, and the Deserter is safe.

And the Soldier, that has deserted this Year, is not oblig'd to tell the Time he run from his Colours; that cannot be known but by the Officer he run from; so that if he antedates the Date, he is as safe as the rest, notwithstanding none can justify giving a Discharge but the commanding Officer of the Regiment.

These Tricks are so perfectly understood, that few Soldiers that have once got out of the Reach of their Officers, but know how to get a Discharge formally drawn, and what Use to make of it afterwards.

And 'tis thus, and by these Methods, that not only the Magistrates, but even the military Officers are impos'd on; for except the military Officer is sure the Discharge is forg'd, altho' he be never so certain that the Soldier was (in this Reign) duly listed, and that he sees him a strong able-bodied Man, fit to undergo all the Fatigues of War; yet if he does not know, I say, the Discharge to be forg'd, 'tis all to no Purpose, he dares no more meddle with him than take a Gentleman's Servant, that never was in the Army, from behind his Master's Coach.

And if the military Officer cannot with Safety apprehend him, 'tis not in the least reasonable to believe, or can it be expected any others should.

And this Practice has so far succeeded, that tho' the Act of Parliament, that requires the Justices and Parish-Officers to apprehend all Deserters and send them to the next Gaol, &c. has been in force these four Years, yet it seldom is (if ever) put in Execution, and the Reason that the Justices who are zealous for Her Majesties Service give for it is, that all they meet with, or
are

are brought before them, produce such Discharges that they cannot distinguish whether true or not. At many such Examinations I have been, where the Justice would have been as glad to have detected the Cheat, as I (who was then a Recruiting) to have had the Men, but the Liberty of the meanest Subject of *England*, is a Privilege not to be taken away upon Probabilities or May-bes. The Law has here prescrib'd the Terms in this very Case, the Justice's Knowledge, the Confession of the Party, or the Evidence of others that he is a Deserter; but the Justice may know, the Man may own, and others may prove he was duly Listed, but if a Discharge be produc'd, tho' never so false, yet it serves to invalidate all the three Marks of Conviction, and till it can be prov'd a Counterfeit, the Justice will not, nay cannot, for 'tis against Law to, commit him.

And the Constables, and all other Parish-Officers, every where pay that regard to all Discharges and Furlows whatsoever; so as never to meddle with any Deserter that shews one, tho' they know he is every way else a Man, as is describ'd in the Act to Recruit the Army.

And the formal Stories of Money paid, &c. which the Deserter seldom fails to mention, especially when he knows he cannot readily be disprov'd, and the certainty that it is too often true, together with the Strength and Abilities of the Man for a Camp, are such concurring Circumstances as are sufficient to induce any indifferent Person to believe it.

It was this, I humbly conceive, was the Occasion of that part of the House of Commons Address to Her Majesty, the 31st. of *March*, 1708. **That Her Majesty will be pleas'd particularly to shew her Displeasure to such Officers, as shall dismiss any Person so listed for Money or any other Pretence.**

Tho' upon the whole I am verily persuaded, that where one Soldier is discharg'd for Money, 100 run from their Colours, with only the Pretence of it, and that the flanking lac'd Coats that were then so much worn, proceeded from another cause than the Profits of discharging Soldiers from their Duty.

For he that considers, that the Charge and Expences of listing Soldiers have of late been such, that if the Officer accepts of less than 8 or 10 *l.* for the Discharge of a serviceable Man, he is a Loser by the Bargain; and I am afraid the Poverty of the Country is such, that it seldom is in the Power of those that are turn'd over by the Justice, to raise such a Sum, whatever the Town-Sparks may do. And the Officers have on other Occasions shewn more Zeal and Fidelity; as King *William* was graciously pleas'd several times to declare from the Throne, and his Grace the Duke of *Marlborough* has done them the Honour very emphatically to express himself in their Favour to the House of Commons, *viz.* **That their Zeal and Affection for the Service, is equal to the Courage and Bravery they have shewn during this whole War.**

But let the fault be either in the Officer or Soldier, or both, there will be, and is a necessity for the Discharge to carry some other distinguishing mark besides the Hand-writing of the Officer, before there can be any Hope to take off the Security and Encouragement that forg'd Discharges give Desertion.

'Twas this I suppose was the Occasion of the Clause added to the late Recruit-Act; that none under the degree of a Field Officer and Commanding the Regiment in Chief, should give any Discharge to any Soldier, under the Penalty of Breaking; which has not at all stop't the forg'd Discharges, nor has it given the Country any light in the matter; for as Her Majesty has near 300 Field-Officers in her Service, in the Foot and Marines, besides *Brevets*, who do sometimes Command the Regiment in Chief; 'tis very unlikely so many Hands should be so generally known, as readily to discover the Cheat.

And the General Officers and Colonels that have the Command of Regiments (who on other Occasions prefer their Honour above Life it self) have the greatest reason to have all Discharges carry with them such distinguishing marks as cannot be Counterfeited, lest their Names should be abus'd with Forgeries, as their Inferiour Officers have been, and 'tis so far from being a fanciful *Chimera* of my own, that such Affronts will

will be offer'd 'em, that I can assure 'em (and prove it by many Instances) the practice is already begun, and Colonels Names set to Furlows and Discharges (of a late date) who have been above six Months past abroad in Her Majesty's Service in Foreign Countries, and cannot yet so much as hear of the matter.

And every one that has to do with Exchequer-Bills knows, that 'tis the Stamp and Indenture that gives them Security, that they are not impos'd on with Counterfeits, rather than the Sign Manual of Sir Robert Howard, or the Lord Halifax; Were that the only distinguishing mark, I believe many of the Tattlers Hounds would run the Hazard of the Felony for the sake of the Profit.

And there is daily a necessity of discharging Men out of the Army; for in War there are so many Accidents that render Men unserviceable, besides the Loss of a Limb or the use of it, that entitles 'em to Chelsea-College, and so many Men brought to Regiments by Young and unexperient'd Officers, that are refus'd by the Generals, who must be discharg'd and sent home. Therefore, that every one concern'd may readily distinguish Counterfeits from legal Discharges; this draught of a Discharge is humbly propos'd, the Charge of which will be so very small to each Regiment, that if it prevents but one Soldier running from his Colours, or is the occasion but of one Deserter's being taken up, belonging to any one Regiment of Foot, to the end of the War, will near pay the Cost of it: It will satisfy the Justices of Peace, the Commissioners and Parish-Officers, that all care is taken to prevent Desertion, and all undue Practices in discharging Soldiers; the want of which has been a great Discouragement to them, in listing Men whom they find return with pretended Discharges, or sham Furlows which they cannot distinguish from true ones, almost as often as listed; and as there is no Thoughts of recruiting the Army without their Assistance; so 'tis but highly reasonable they should have all the Satisfaction possible in the case of Desertion; here they will easily see the Reason for which the Man was Discharg'd, of which they themselves will be Judges, by comparing the Discharge with the Man it is given to, and leaves them without excuse, if they do not apprehend all Deserters.

as the Law commands ; for all that do not produce such Discharges, in which if the Marks of the Bearer and the Description of the Man in the Discharge do not exactly agree, they will be easily found to be Deserters, and the readier taken up, and it will take off the Scandal cast upon the Officers of the Army, not only to the House of Commons, but to the Queen Her Self, or leave the guilty Officer to an easie and ready Conviction. It will prevent that too common Practice of Sergeants, when conducting Recruits to their Quarters, in letting them go for a little Money, and then pretend to their Officers they are Deserted ; the Truth of which few Officers of any standing in the Army, but can by dear bought Experience justifie ; this will put it out of their Power to play any more Tricks of that Nature, for that none of these Discharges will be in their Power to come at, nor indeed any other Officer of the Regiment, but by the Commander in Chief's Appointment.

For by the following Method it will be impossible for any Soldier to be Discharg'd out of any of Her Majesty's Regiments of Foot or Marines, without the Colonel's Knowledge of it, and for what Reason ; and not only so, but give him an Opportunity to know at all times what his Officers are doing, for in all well govern'd Regiments, there is a constant weekly Return made by the Commanding Officer of each Company of what Men are Listed, or Run, or Dead, or Discharg'd as unserviceable that Week from each Company ; by which Accounts and Returns the Officers receive pay for the Effectives, and the Non-effective Money stopt for a Fund to Recruit with, and the Major or Adjutant, or both, keep Books, in which are enter'd the Names and Reason of all Men that are at any time Discharg'd from the Regiment. Therefore to make such a Discharge useful it will be necessary,

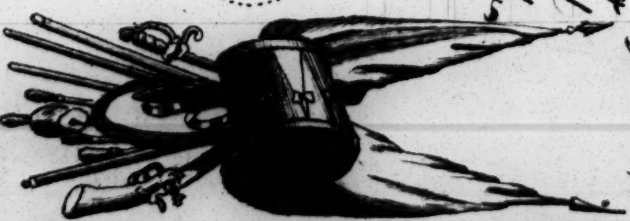
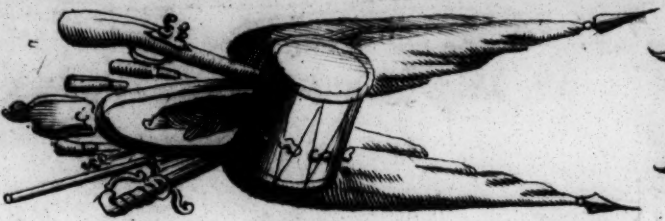
First, That a sufficient Number of Blank Discharges (which 'tis suppos'd 300 may be enough for any Regiment to the end of the War) be prepar'd for each Battallion of Foot and Marines that Recruit in *England*, and bound up in two Books, the one to be kept by the Major abroad, the other by the Agent, or such Officer as the Colonel shall appoint in *England*, from whence they may be cut off by Indenture, when there is a just occasion.

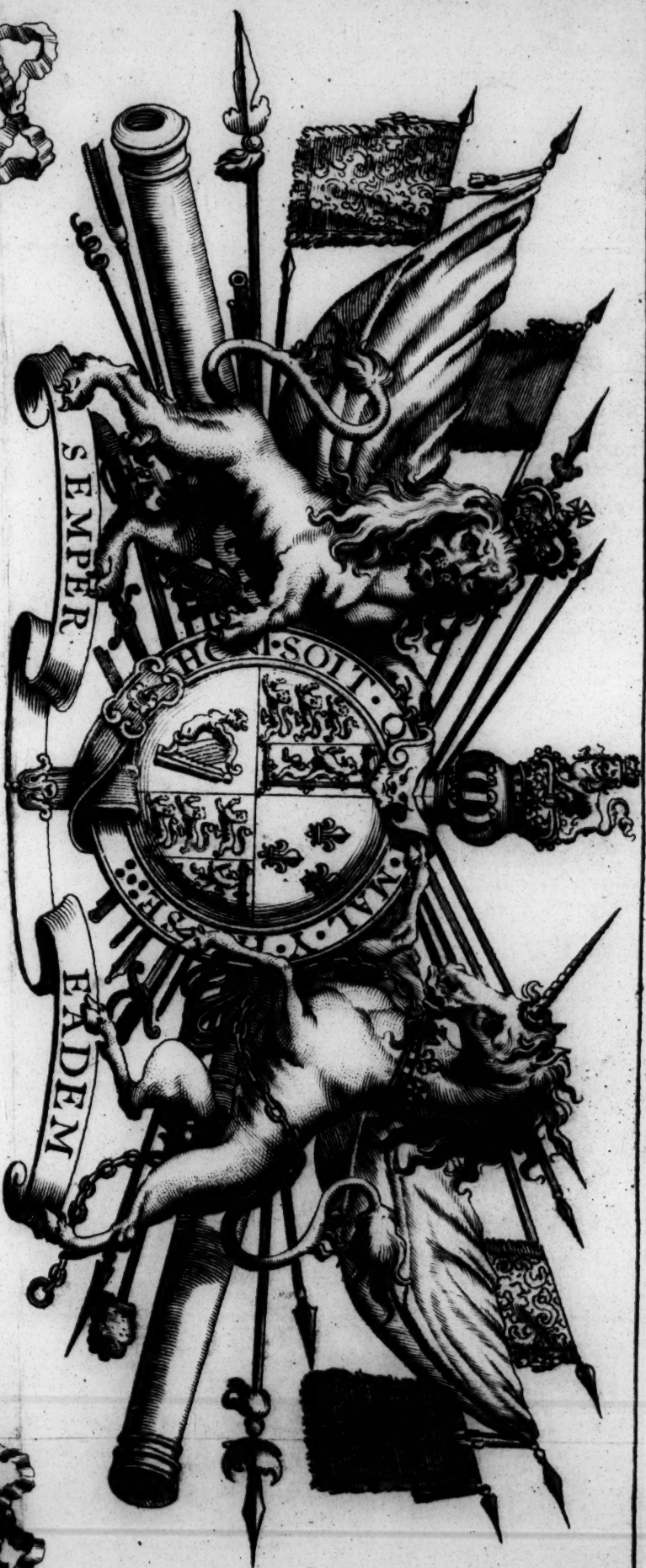
Secondly,



Company in the Regiment, above five foot seven inches
high fifty five Years of Age rank Grizell
* * * * * Hair, of a thorn and Pale * * * * *
* * * * * Complexion, by Trade a Shoe maker * * * * *
late Inhabitant of Halifax * * * * *
in the County of York * * * * *
by reason of his Age and a Rupture that renders
him unfit for Service in the Army * * * * *
I do hereby Discharge him from his Service in the said
Regiment and Company, Given under my Hand and
Seal at Portsmouth * * * * * this twenty
first day of Dec^r 1709

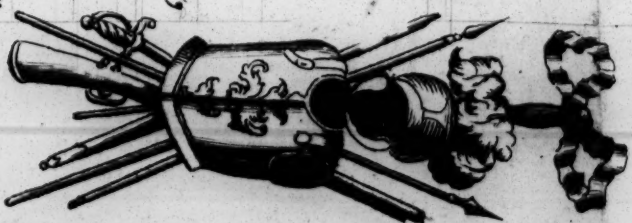
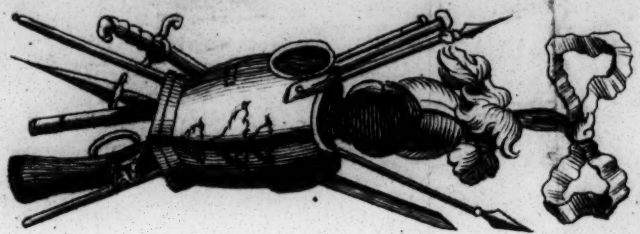
W^m Simonds

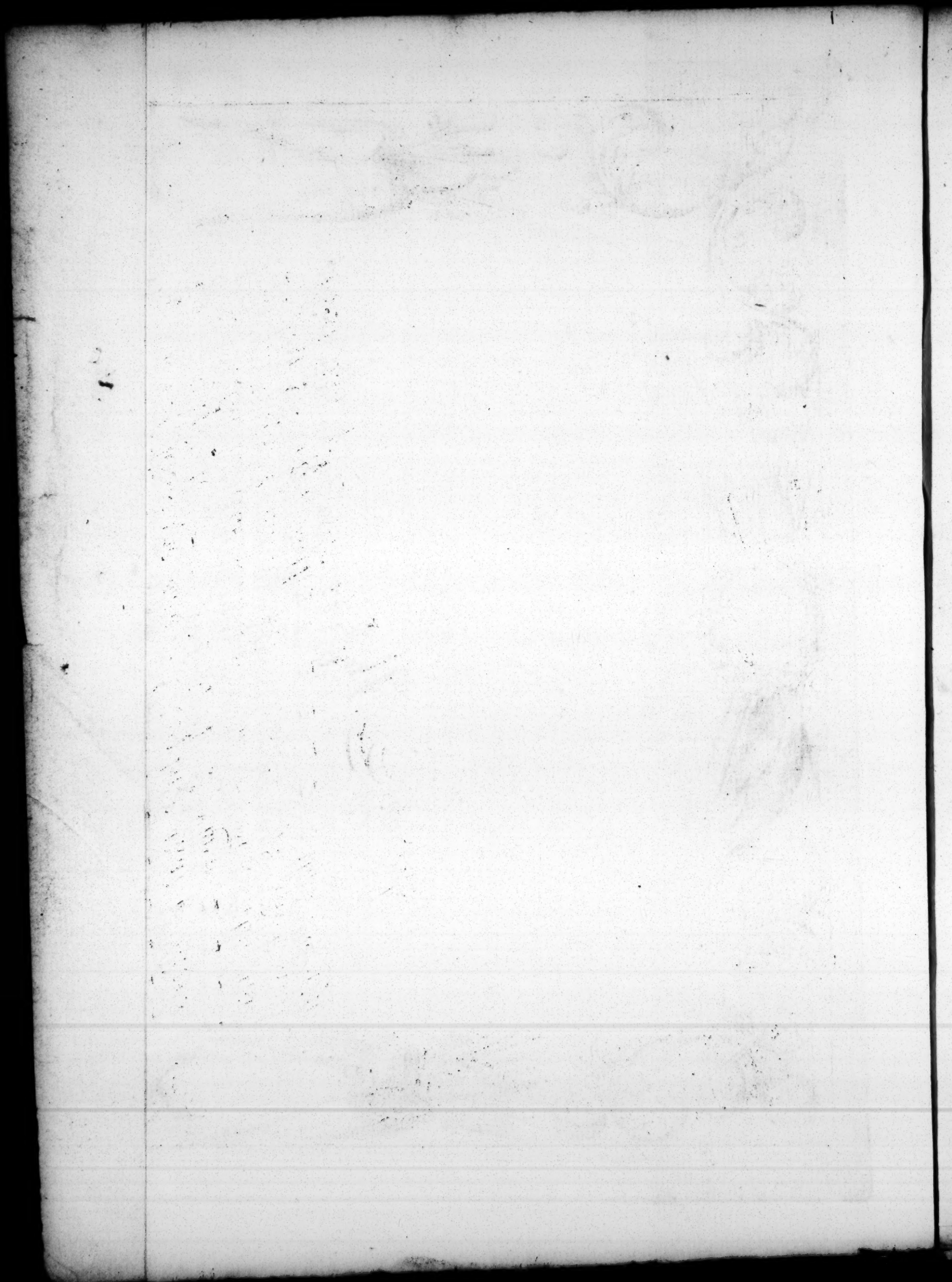




By Coll^l W^m Symonds Coll^l of One of
 Her Maj^{ties} Regiment of Foot

These are to Certifie all whom it may concern,
 that the Bearer hereof John Taylor * * * *
 * * * Soldier in Cap^t William Blanks * * *
 Company in the Regiment, above five foot seven Inches *
 high fifty five Years of Age rank Grizel^d * * * * *





Secondly, That each Book have an equal Number of blank Discharges, and that they be all number'd, and that not one more be printed off but what are thus Bound up.

Thirdly, That the Commanding Officer, who Signs the Discharge, take care that an exact Copy of it be enter'd in the Major's Book abroad, or Agents at home; by this Method the Colonel by seeing at any time what Discharges are left, will exactly know what Men have been Discharg'd in his Regiment, and the Major's and Agent's Books will give him a perfect Account of the Mens Names, Time and Reason of their Discharge; and should there be any foul or clandestine Practice, the Colonel must of necessity know it; and whenever any Complaint comes to the Secretary of War of that Nature, the Colonel will be able to give him a just Account how the matter stands: And should any Officer make an ill use of any of these Discharges, he cannot hope but to be soon detected, for the N^o of the Discharge will make it evident, what Regiment's Books the Discharge was cut from, tho' it should be fill'd up and sign'd with fictitious Names; as for Example, the 1st Battalion of Guards, the N^o will be from 1 to 300, the 2^d Battalion from 301 to 600, the 3^d to 900, the 4th to 1200; the 1st Battalion of the 2^d Regiment, from 1200 to 1500, the 2^d Battalion to 1800; the 1st Battalion of the Lord *Orkney's* from 1801 to 2100, the 2^d Battalion to 2400; the Regiment of *Portmore* from 2401 to 2700, and so to the Youngest Regiment of the Army.

It is very unlikely these can be Counterfeited, for Mr. *Sturt* that cut it, was trusted with engraving all the Plates for the Exchequer-Bills, and none of these have been dispers'd till the Blanks have been fill'd up, as this is, and that makes them wholly useless for a Discharge afterwards, and the Counterfeiting a Copper Plate will be too Expensive for any Soldier to attempt, and should any one do it, to dispose of for gain, he must be soon detected, for the Master's Hand in engraving is as well known by Artists, as those of the Pencil; but should that be past over, the Number and Indenture will presently discover the Forgery, and the Parliament may (if they think fit)

fit) lay such a Penalty as will wholly prevent the attempting it.

And the sending one of these Discharges, the Blanks fill'd up, to every Place of meeting of the Commissioners, will give not only them, but the Parish Officers, and all others that see them, such a view of them, that it will be impossible for 'em afterwards to be impos'd on with any Counterfeit Discharge whatsoever.

Which brings me to what I chiefly intended by this to shew, that if the Legislature think fit to recal and make void all Discharges and Furlows whatsoever, given any time since this War began, in the manner here after mention'd, I believe it cannot fail of not only preventing (in a great Measure) Desertion for the future, but of bringing in a very large and timely Recruit to the Army out of the vast Numbers of Deserters, that now live at home in the greatest Security, and so entirely depend on their forg'd Discharges, and being Covenant-Servants for their safety, that they are not in the least apprehensive of any Danger of being so much as suspected of Desertion; and therefore may be taken all the ease possible, which when ever put in Practice, 'tis reasonable to believe may bring in the largest Recruit the Army has had perhaps any one Year this War, but till something of this Nature be put in Practice, the Clause in the Deserters Bill of 5 l. Penalty, *Or where the Party has no Chattels, a Month's Imprisonment*, for any one that harbours any deserting Soldier, knowing him to be such, is wholly useless and of no force; for when the Law requir'd it to be determin'd in the General Quarter Sessions (which for the more speedy bringing to a hearing, the Power is now lodg'd in the two next Justices of the Peace) I have known the Offender escape the Punishment, by producing a forg'd Discharge of the Deserters, and altho' it was fully prov'd to be a Counterfeit, yet because it could not be prov'd the Defendant knew it to be such, his Council urg'd he was not within the Words of the Act, (*Knowing him to be such*) and so was acquitted; and the ill consequence this Verdict immediately had was such, that a Gentleman of Quality, who was then raising a Company in the same County, I have a List by me of 45 Men he lost by Desertion in three Months time,

time before he could compleat his Company, that was to consist but of sixty private Soldiers, Servants included.

And 'tis the same thing before the two Justices of Peace; where-ever a forg'd Discharge is produc'd, except it can be prov'd the Harboured of the Deserter was in the Secret, there is no inflicting the Penalty of the Act on the Offender.

Therefore there appears a necessity to make void all written Discharges, and bring it for the future to this Test (or something like it, that cannot easily be Counterfeited) and then there will be no Room left for an Evasion, and the Protectors of Deserters so easily prosecuted, that I do not doubt, but Informers will be found to earn the Reward which the Law allows to any one that convicts the Harboured of a Deserter; and when a few, if but one or two in a large Town or Hundred, have paid for their Fraud, 'tis but reasonable to believe the rest that know themselves Guilty of the same Crime, will turn them out of their Service at least, if not deliver them up to the Officers, to avoid the like Fine and save themselves harmless; for this I assert as a certain truth, that there is not one Deserter in a hundred that lies conceal'd in *England*, but is known to others of the Neighbourhood, besides the House he shelters in, to have been in the Army (*London*, and within the Bills of Mortality excepted, and very often there) but the difficulty is to prove how he left it, whether legally Discharg'd or not: Which present difficulty gives Knaves and Rogues such Opportunity as with ease to avoid and render useless the good Laws of the Nation, to prevent Desertion, which is such an Affront to any Government as not to be endur'd, especially considering the Mischief it carries with it.

For Furlows, which has been another Occasion of Desertion, and a Handle to many other Abuses, I do not see the necessity for any to be allow'd of, for I do not know any Business a Soldier has out of the Sound of his Captain's Drum, except it be when he is assisting his Officer in recruiting or apprehending Deserters, and then he has a Sergeant at least with him, which is sufficient to protect him; the Parliament

has allow'd no Furlow to be of Force but 14 Days, but then it is known, that 12 Furlows will last 6 Months, if the Bearer has but skill enough to sort them by their proper Dates, and if there should (as it is probable there may sometimes) happen some inconveniency to both Officer and Soldier the allowing of no Furlow, but not equal to the Mischiefs proceeding from them, and small Inconveniences are to give place, and be past over for the sake of greater Benefits,

Or if it be thought of absolute necessity to allow of Furlows, let them be made after the manner of the Discharge, not easie to be Counterfeited and all alike, that the Country may know them at first sight, whether they are legal or not.

Every one will readily agree with me in this, that there is all the Reason, Justice, and even Necessity to force those that are Able-body'd Men and Deserters again to their Duty, notwithstanding their pretended Discharges; the hardship is only where there has been a clandestine Bargain between the Officer and the Soldier, where the Officer has forfeited the Trust repos'd in him by accepting of a Bribe, and the Soldier procured his Liberty with his Money, to raise which perhaps, his very Bed was sold from under him; where this is made appear before the Commissioners appoin'd to put the Act in Force to Recruit the Army, who no doubt on't are the properest Persons to examine into such Abuses, and to determine all matters of that kind, I cannot think it any hardship for the Officer's Arrears, or growing Pay to be stop't to satisfie the Sum so injuriously taken to Her Majesty's Service, but the Man to be oblig'd to serve again, for there is an unavoidable necessity for the Army to be Recruited in time; which I am much afraid cannot be done, except the Commissioners (sometimes) send Men whose Case is even harder, than that of one that has underhand given Money for his Discharge, especially when he is to be paid it again; there is hardly any Occurrence of Life but is attended with some Inconvenience, and to be sure many in finding a sufficient number of Men for the Service of the Foot and Marines; but that will be no Reason for the neglect of what is of that pressing necessity, that the safety and property

ty of every Man of Substance depends on the effectual Performance of it.

But where it does appear the Discharge was given above-board, at the Request of the Gentlemen of the Country, or the principal Inhabitants of the Town, in order for the Man's better providing for his Family, or to enable him to enjoy some considerable Legacy, or that he has a Right to give his Vote for a Member of Parliament, tho' the Officer was paid for the Discharging of the Soldier (for there is no Reason for a Captain to part with a serviceable Man, and find the Levy-Money out of his own Pocket to List another in his stead) where the Fact thus appears, the Soldier (upon a Certificate from the Commissioners) to have one of these Discharges sent him from the Regiment he came out of, or the Commissioners to Register and Counter-sign the Discharge, so as the honest Fellow may have no farther trouble about it.

And when this Method of Discharging is reduc'd to Practice, it will enable every one whose Business it is to look after or apprehend Deserters, to reduce the matter in Contest to this short Issue: YOU ARE AN ABLE-BODY'D MAN, FIT TO SERVE AS A SOLDIER, AND HAVE BEEN IN THE FOOT SERVICE THIS WAR. WHERE IS YOUR DISCHARGE? And the not producing one of these, or a Certificate from the Commissioners, &c. will of course prove he run from his Colours, and take off all the Shifts and Evasions that us'd to be made by those that harbour Deserters.

There is another great Security given to Deserters, by the Army it self, especially for this 2 or 3 Years past, *viz.* That no Officers (or but very seldom) ever give themselves the trouble of looking after them, and the Reasons are these:

First, The large Levy-Money, &c. makes all Recruits so chargeable to the Officers, that all their Time and Thoughts, all the Assistance of their Sergeant and other trusty Soldiers they have with them are imploy'd, and little enough to secure their own Recruits, for if an Officer loses any before he brings them to the Regiment, or are muster'd by a Commis-

fary, not only the Levy-Money, but the very Subſiſtance he has paid them is entirely loſt, and no Satisfaction ever made to him afterwards for it.

Secondly, Should an Officer take up any Deſerter that did not belong to the Regiment he ſerves in, 'tis all the odds in the World, but the Man is claim'd by ſome Officer of the Regiment he run from, which if it happen in *England*, he muſt deliver him up, and well if he can get the Money again he paid to ſubſiſt him, but no Allowance for the time he loſt in taking him, or Satisfaction for his Care and Pains of ſecuring him afterwards; therefore, 'tis not for the Intereſt of any Officer to look after any Deſerter but his own.

Thirdly, And by the neceſſity there was of diſtributing the Recruiting-Officers theſe 2 or 3 laſt Years, ſo that all Places might be furniſh'd with Officers ready to receive ſuch Recruits as ſhould be deliver'd them at the Sessions of the Juſtices, or at the ſeveral Places of Meeting of the Commiſſioners was ſuch, that few happen'd to go to thoſe Places where they formerly rais'd their Men; ſo had not Opportunities of looking after their own Deſerters, and for fear they ſhould be taken from them, by the Officer he run from (who claims the only Right and Property to them) none elſe will.

There is none will diſpute the Right that all Regiments have to all Deſerters from it, but of what value or worth is this Right and Property till the Deſerter is taken? 'tis but like *Teague's* Inventory, 20 Couple of wild Ducks his own Goods when he can catch them; and the ſtanding upon theſe Punctilio's, is a very great Injury to the Service in General, which is always, as far as is poſſible, to be avoided.

And therefore if for this Year only, (which I hope will be the laſt of recruiting this War) all Officers of the Foot and Marines were allow'd to keep for the Service of their Regiments, all Deſerters they can take or cauſe to be taken up of any Regiment of Foot and Marines, it will be a great Advantage to the Army in General, and no Loſs to any Regiment in particular;

lar; for if *A* takes up all the Deserters he can find of *B*'s in *Yorkshire*, and *B* at the same time takes up all the Deserters he can find of *A*'s in *Devonshire*; is it not the same thing as if *A* and *B* took their own Deserters? is not the Army (which is the only thing to be consider'd) as well supply'd with Men? let the Men be had, and should there happen to be any dispute where there is no occasion, the Secretary of War (to whom I believe it would be necessary for all Officers to make a return of all Deserters they take up, and what Regiment they run from) (or General Officers) has Prudence and Justice sufficient to make every Regiment and Officer easie, and thoroughly satisfied with the Distribution, &c. they may see occasion to make of them afterwards.

But while *A* will not look after *B*'s Deserters, least he should be a loser by the Bargain, and *B* has not an opportunity (being sent into another Country) to do it himself; nor *B* concern himself with *A*'s Deserters for the same Reason: In the mean time all Deserters have such Opportunities by these Mismanagements, and the other Arts of their own, (as I have hinted at above) of living at home in *England*, with all the safety and security that they themselves can desire, and so few that are punish'd for Desertion when taken (through the Tenderness and Mercy of the Government) that a Soldier hardly runs any hazard by deserting in *England*, so that 'tis so far from being a surprise to me, that Soldiers run from their Colours, and that there are such vast Numbers of Deserters in *England*; that I rather wonder, that any Soldier that is in the least uneasie with the Service of the Army that is in *England*, or can any way get to *England*, stays with his Regiment.

But before it can be expected Deserters should be discover'd and taken up with any Success, it will be necessary the Officers of the Army should have that Encouragement (as the having all those they can take allow'd to 'em as good Recruits is sufficient) for 'tis their Diligence and Application, their Interest with, and Influence over the Constables, &c. but more especially with (in this case) necessary Implement, the Informer, that must give Life and Vigour to the Undertaking; for the Justices,
Commissioners,

Commissioners, and Parish Officers, &c. do every where believe (if one may be allow'd to judge by their Actions) that when they have caus'd the Man to be deliver'd over for a Soldier, they have done all that is required of them, the Soldier is then in the sole Power of the Military Officer, whose Business alone it is to keep their Men together, and to look after those that at any time desert from them; tho' if these Gentlemen would give themselves the trouble to look over the Act of Parliament in that case, they will find more is required of them.

In a Word therefore, there is an absolute necessity to make void all Discharges of this Reign, and suffer none for the future, but what carries such a distinguishing Mark along with them, that neither the Officers of the Army, nor the Gentlemen of the Country can be imposed on with Counterfeits; to make useless all sham Furlows, and let the Officers that are sent this Year to Recruit, have the Benefit of all the Deserters they can take up, and prove before the Commissioners to be such, or let the Commissioners be empower'd to Command the Constables, &c. in their Warrants, particularly to bring before them all such Able-body'd Men, that they know or have any Information of, to have been list'd into the Service of the Foot or Marines this War, notwithstanding their producing any Discharge from it whatsoever; and *England* will soon be found no Place of Security for an Able-body'd Deserter, and the Army soon recruited out of the great Numbers of them, together with the help of the good Laws now in Force for that Service; and then 'tis reasonable to believe the Soldier will not be so apt to run from his Colours, when he knows all the Subterfuges and Arts that us'd to protect him at home, are so far render'd void and useless, that he cannot in the least hope or expect, but that he will be soon taken and punish'd, perhaps with that Death his Crime deserves. For as 'tis evident, that the Security at home has been the chief, if not only, Cause of Desertion, remove but that (as this Method if duly put in Execution, cannot fail in a great Measure of doing) and 'tis highly reasonable the Mischievous Effects will cease, and then the Officers will always
be

be able to keep their Regiments full and compleat with well-disciplin'd Soldiers; who, with the Blessing of Providence, will soon bring us what we have been so long struggling for, *viz.* A Safe, Honourable, and Lasting Peace.

FINIS.

It is to keep their Regiments in the field
and to keep them in the field of operations, and
to keep them in the field of operations for the
purpose of keeping them in the field of operations.



